
SOCIAL SERVICES

SOCIAL SERVICES: OUTCOMES BASED BUDGETING

Created by the NC General Assembly, the Durham County Department of Social Services exists to provide Durham citizens with resources and services to maximize their well being and self-determination. We aim to partner with families and the community to achieve prosperity, permanence, safety and support.

The Department of Social Services has made a significant investment in time over the past year to focus on **developing outcomes and indicators** for the families we serve. DSS is the first agency in the County to begin to move toward outcomes-based budgeting. DSS is using outcomes-based budgeting to link results for families, children and individuals to the budget. We aim to link where we allocate our money to the results we get for families and individuals. It can help decision-makers improve programs, target budget allocations, make better use of existing resources, and ultimately, achieve better results for children, families, individuals and communities.

Why Outcomes Based Budgeting? Our major family outcome goals (*Reducing Family Poverty, Increasing Family Permanence, Increasing Family Safety & Well Being, and Improving Access to Services & Customer Service*) are closely aligned with the major outcome goals of our Board of County Commissioners. We have invested time in developing our goals and collecting data on indicators that can tell us if we are getting closer or further from achieving those goals. Now we can make a clearer case for funding our programs or proposed expansion items based on the data. These statistics make better arguments for funding essential services than saying, “it is a federal mandate” or merely “the caseload is increasing”. While both of those statements are true and important, we can now say more about what is happening to families with powerful charts and graphs.

Our work next year will focus on re-aligning our outcome goals with our budget organization. Currently, our Cost Centers in the budget system are not organized by our outcomes. We are not where we want to be, but we are getting closer.

The department’s budget for FY 203-2004 is based on State and Federal Mandates, it addresses compliance risks (i.e., HIPAA) and it maximizes State and Federal revenues. We have requested expansion items, which are based on documented needs and targeted to meet our outcome goals.